CHAPTER SIX

Professional Self-Care

Integrating your Autistic identity and professional life is a powerful way to reduce the energy you expend on masking and mitigate overexertion. For many of us, the cycle of working, collapsing, and repeating is all too familiar.

Unfortunately, Autistic people face disproportionately high rates of unemployment and underemployment, a trend that resonates with the challenges many of us experience in navigating work environments. From our distinct cognitive processing styles to sensory sensitivities, numerous factors can make workplace dynamics difficult to navigate. In some cases, a lack of confidence may lead us to settle for roles beneath our potential, while others grapple with impostor syndrome, perfectionism, and the desire to please, often leading to burnout and crash cycles! For all these reasons, it's crucial to focus some of your self-care efforts on your professional world.

Interestingly, many late-in-life-identified Autistic people reconsider their career paths in the wake of this revelation. As we begin to construct lives that work for us, I've noticed that many of us shift toward careers that align with our interests and support our sensory well-being.

In this chapter, you'll find activities divided into a few key categories: navigating the workplace, creating an optimal work environment, and finding executive functioning support. You'll learn strategies for crafting a work environment tailored to your strengths and preferences. Topics include navigating self-disclosure in professional settings, advocating for accommodations, managing sensory sensitivities, and capitalizing on Autistic strengths. Your skills, ideas, and work ethic make you an important asset to your workplace—the entries in this chapter will make sure your workplace is a beneficial part of your life as well.

Selectively Share Your Autistic Identity with Colleagues

Workplace Tips

A common cause of stress is whether to reveal your Autistic identity within a professional environment.

When contemplating self-disclosure in the workplace, here are some considerations:

- **Clarify your motives:** Reflect on why you'd share your autism with others. Is it to establish authentic connections with colleagues? Do you want people to understand your actions better? Are you seeking accommodations? Understanding the motivations behind self-disclosure and your hoped-for outcome can help guide your decision.
- **Determine who needs to know:** While you might inform human resources about your diagnosis, not everyone at work needs this info. Certain managers may need to know in order to implement accommodations you qualify for; however, getting accommodations doesn't automatically grant your entire workplace access to your diagnosis (this information is typically protected, depending on your workplace protocols). To know who has access, inquire with human resources during the accommodations process.
- **Identify how much you need to share:** Carefully evaluate which alterations in your environment could improve your quality of life (such as wearing a hat to mitigate lighting, relocating to minimize exposure to strong scents, or requesting softer lighting), and subsequently, consider the level of self-disclosure necessary to effectively convey these needs. You're not obligated to divulge everything (for insights into partial versus full self-disclosure, see Decide Whether to Tell People You Are Autistic in Chapter 5).

- **Assess the risks:** There are inherent risks regardless of your choice. If you choose not to disclose, coworkers might speculate about your behavior without proper context, leading to potentially misconstrued narratives. Conversely, if you do decide to disclose, people might interpret your actions through the lens of autism stereotypes, and this could include doubting your capability for certain tasks. For instance, in my field, the misconception that Autistic people can't be good therapists still persists! Therefore, a therapist in training may opt to carefully weigh the potential consequences of sharing this information with a supervisor. There is no risk-free path, so it is wise to weigh the risks thoughtfully.

Your decision to self-disclose professionally is personal and context dependent. Your professional goals are an important part of your life, so consider what choices will make your workdays less stressful, more in line with your values, and ultimately more fulfilling.

Navigate Context Shifting in the Workplace

Workplace Tips

In the ever-evolving world of workplaces, grappling with neurotypical culture's intricacies can trigger anxiety. Context shifting in the workplace is often demanding and can involve the art of smoothly transitioning across a wide range of tasks, communication styles, and expectations. Plus, you're also navigating social interactions along with juggling professional duties.

Allistic people possess an innate ability to absorb context cues subcortically—meaning their brains intuitively pick up these subtle differences, which allows them to effortlessly grasp context signals. On the other hand, Autistic people are more context independent, embodying authenticity across situations and contexts. We don't inherently absorb context cues as seamlessly as our allistic peers do. Instead, we need to mobilize our prefrontal cortexes to analyze situations.

For example, say there's a team meeting where everyone appears engaged, but there's an unspoken tension in the room. Autistic people might not immediately grasp this undercurrent because it's not explicitly communicated. Instead, we might need to consciously analyze the situation, observing body language, tone, and other context cues to decipher the dynamics. This process demands significant mental effort and can be mentally draining.

This can make it tricky to navigate traditional workplaces. Regrettably, our difficulty with automatically picking up subtle context cues related to authority, hierarchy, and professionalism can lead to misinterpretation. In certain cases, this misinterpretation can even result in premature job terminations and erroneous blame for unprofessional conduct.

If you find yourself in the throes of context shifting in your workplace, here are some tips:

- **Ask for explicit guidance:** Seek direct guidance on workplace norms and rules, particularly in scenarios where the context shifts. If, for instance, colleagues frequently dine together or there are workplace holiday events, inquire about the explicit rules that underlie these shifts.
- **Observe and learn:** I honed my context-cue skills by becoming a mini social scientist during childhood. Likewise, if you become an amateur social scientist in the workplace, you might find yourself better able to decode the context norms. Study your colleagues' communication patterns, body language, and strategies. If you're comfortable, discuss subtle shifts you've noticed with someone you trust. Observing neurotypicals within their natural habitat is a great way to learn about their intricacies.
- **Seek support:** Don't hesitate to seek guidance from mentors, peers, or supervisors. Consider requesting a mentor, especially if you're openly Autistic at work, who can be your go-to person for Autistic-allistic queries. Collaborating with an allistic person to help you decode the subtleties can take some of the guesswork out of it!

Remember, context shifting is exhausting work, and context decoding often involves an element of masking, which negatively impacts mental health and energy levels for Autistic people. Perhaps the best way to address this is to choose a field that is more Autistic friendly. Fields like tech, STEM fields, medicine, and academia are often more innately Autistic friendly. Additionally, many Autistic people find relief when they're able to work remotely. If your workplace isn't currently Autistic friendly, however, try the tips in this entry and be sure to take care of your body and mind as you do.

Document Everything

Workplace Tips

Autistic people's direct communication style and optimism can make us more susceptible to exploitation within certain systems or situations. Navigating these dynamics demands a proactive approach, and consistent documentation can help you assert your stance during conflicts and provide a record that creates some safeguard from unjust blame.

Your documentation does not need to be intricate. A basic word processing document, notes app, or email program can serve as an effective tool. Describe conversations as accurately as your memory allows.

Here are some documenting tips for keeping track of situations and events so you're prepared:

- **Capture conversations** and agreements as factual reference points.
- **Note** pivotal points, decisions, and agreements.
- Provide **chronological context** with date, time, and location.
- Capture the essence of what was said in **concise summaries**.
- **Preserve** relevant email trails. In addition, consider sending follow-up emails summarizing key points of conversation to be sure everyone's on the same page.

Documenting empowers you, shaping your narrative and strengthening your stance, especially should you ever need to CYA (cover your ass). Plus, it can build self-confidence and conviction in the workplace and help you feel more in control.

Ditch Perfectionism

Workplace Tips

Autistic people often possess intensely focused minds. While this can manifest as brilliance in areas of passion, it also presents challenges. For instance, minor design details can pull us into hyperfixation mode. This heightened focus and these high standards can also drive us to perfectionism, causing distress, fatigue, and overworking.

Here are practices you can employ to liberate yourself from the grip of perfectionism:

- **Embrace the practice of "good enough" work:** This will be a gradual process that you should try a little at a time. Try to purposefully submit work that meets your "good enough" standard (not your "perfect" standard), gradually desensitizing yourself to the distress and stress that may accompany it. With each iteration, the "good enough" work becomes more manageable. Consider it a process of strengthening your resilience muscle against the pressure of delivering flawless outcomes.
- **Embrace feedback:** Ask your boss which details genuinely contribute to the bigger picture. Given our tendency to delve into specifics, an external perspective can help you gauge where you should focus your time and energy.
- **Master mindfulness:** Cultivate mindfulness to stay rooted in the present moment. When your mind conjures perfectionistic scripts, practice identifying and naming them. This simple act can help diminish the mental clutter that fuels perfectionist tendencies.

By aiming to let go of perfectionism, you can forge a more balanced, sustainable work journey while leveraging your inherent strengths. This plan will help you reduce stress and make your job more enjoyable.

Ask for Examples

Workplace Tips

In college and graduate school, one of the first things I'd do when assigned a new project was google for examples. I always really appreciated when professors provided examples from previous years. Here's the thing: I often didn't know where to start without visual context for what was being asked of me! Having examples can be immensely helpful for Autistic people, and this tip is especially valuable in the workplace.

Here are some of the ways an example can help support you:

- **It clarifies the instructions:** Allistic people often provide vague directions. Having an example can help clarify what is being asked.
- **It provides visual context:** Autistic people often thrive on visual learning; information presented in a visual context carries more meaning and understanding. Plus, visual examples provide an anchor for your comprehension. They offer a concrete representation of what's expected, making it easier to process, absorb, and execute tasks accurately.
- **It helps with sequencing:** Sequencing the steps to get from one point to another can be difficult for Autistic people. Seeing an example can help us to sequence the actions needed to complete the task.
- **It can save hours of potential frustration, sweat, and anxiety:** A visual model significantly reduces the need for trial and error and wasted effort.
- **It enhances productivity:** By seeking examples, you're not just accommodating your learning style—you're building a bridge between your understanding and the task at hand. This bridge minimizes the potential for errors and ensures that your contributions align with the expectations.

Advocating for yourself and asking for examples clearly has lots of benefits, both for you and your employer.

Here are some things to keep in mind when asking for examples:

- Connect your request to an underlying need. Express your preference for visual learning and your interest in examples.
- If you're tasked with a specific project, inquire if there's a template available or a previous similar example. Templates often provide structured frameworks, while previous examples offer practical guides.
- When requesting examples, be specific about the type of guidance you're seeking. For example, ask for last year's document, a step-by-step illustration, or a reference of similar work.

By requesting examples, you're not only advocating for yourself but also contributing to a more inclusive work environment for all employees. This proactive approach cultivates inclusivity because it promotes a culture of collaboration and support. Your pursuit of visual clarity might even inspire others to adopt similar practices, creating a workplace where diverse learning styles are embraced!

Succeed at Job Interviewing

Workplace Tips

For many Autistic people, job interviews don't exactly showcase our full potential! The conventional interview setting can induce anxiety as it frequently depends on spontaneity and rapid processing. We often thrive as deep processors, benefitting from ample time to formulate thoughtful responses. The interview landscape, often devoid of contextual familiarity and spontaneity, can be disorienting.

Here are some tips that can help make the process less stressful and better allow you to showcase your skills:

- **Practice:** Repeated practice is your ally. Search online for commonly asked interview questions and rehearse your responses. If you are primed for some of the questions ahead of time, you can prepare your answers and respond more confidently.
- **Craft compelling stories:** Compile an arsenal of stories or examples that reflect your problem-solving skills, creativity, and/or determination. It's likely easier to think of these ahead of time than on the spot, and they can become responses to many types of questions.
- **Use strategic pauses:** If rapid-fire responses aren't in your comfort zone, develop a few strategic statements, such as "That's an insightful question; let me gather my thoughts for a moment." This tactical pause gives your mind a moment to process and structure a response.
- **Get contextual clarity:** Having context about the company can help you anchor yourself in the interview. Research the company, its values, and its mission ahead of time. This background knowledge can help you build a conceptual map for the company, resulting in you feeling more grounded.

- **Try mirror and mock interviews:** Practice in front of a mirror or involve a trusted friend for mock interviews. Insights from a friend can illuminate unnoticed elements—spanning body language to tone—aiding you in refining your interview demeanor. Another valuable technique is recording yourself with a voice memo and reviewing it. This tactic has proven effective for me in refining my tone and speech pace and reinforcing word memory.
- **Consider your posture:** Posture, an essential element of nonverbal communication, can often lead to misunderstandings and misjudgments for Autistic people. Many of us unintentionally display a flat affect that might be misconstrued as disinterest. Ask a trusted friend or mentor to help you find a posture that's physically comfortable yet signals openness.
- **Find accommodations for eye contact:** Eye contact can be particularly tricky, as many interviewers expect it. You can experiment with eye contact techniques, like focusing between the interviewer's eyes, subtly conveying engagement while reducing discomfort.

Interviews often trigger anxiety, and they also compel you to grapple with the dilemma of masking versus unmasking. Your approach will hinge on your personal choice and circumstances.

Regardless, practice and preparation enable you to find a balanced approach of embracing your genuine identity while feeling at ease during interviews, allowing your authentic self to shine through.

Compare Bottom-Up Thinking versus Top-Down Thinking

Workplace Tips

Part of what it means to be neurodivergent is that the way we process information diverges from that of neurotypical brains. In the context of the workplace, it can be helpful to understand these different cognitive patterns. Recognizing your unique processing style and how it diverges from the allistic norm can maximize your comfort and productivity in the workplace.

Among the diverse modes of processing, one that distinctly characterizes Autistic brains is bottom-up processing. Bottom-up processing involves an immersive and methodical journey through the nuances of information. Unlike top-down processing, which weaves a few pivotal pieces of data into a coherent whole, bottom-up processing delves into the minute details, meticulously piecing them together to construct a comprehensive understanding. This approach enables Autistic people to forge intricate connections and associations between various elements, cultivating a deep understanding of complex systems.

However, this detailed-oriented approach is a double-edged sword. While it facilitates deep comprehension, it demands substantial cognitive resources. The misnomer of "slow processing" often misrepresents the reality—Autistic people are actually deep processors. This depth necessitates more time, making our initial onboarding into new concepts or systems slower. This initial investment, however, is well worth it and serves us and our workplaces well. Once we immerse ourselves in the intricacies of a subject, our understanding is not only profound but also multifaceted and robust.

In navigating your strengths and challenges in the workplace, the bottom-up cognitive approach presents both advantages and hurdles. Its meticulous nature can be mentally taxing, potentially leading to exhaustion. However, this bottom-up processing style also empowers you to offer thorough and intricate solutions to complex problems.

Acknowledging and embracing this cognitive style can help you lean into your strengths while also encouraging you to be compassionate with yourself when your processing pace differs from those around you. Your eventual mastery will help you build confidence, ultimately enriching the overall landscape of the workplace.

Across your workplace, you might see both bottom-up and top-down thinking. This diversity fosters a dynamic and creative workforce, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of your workplace experience. Taking care of yourself by acknowledging your cognitive style and celebrating its contributions is a crucial aspect of your professional well-being.

Find a Mentor to Show You the Ropes

Workplace Tips

During my training to become a psychologist, each year I switched between new work environments, such as hospital clinics and college universities. This shift brought both the stress of adapting to new systems and rules and the challenge of fitting into subtle cultural norms.

In these fresh work settings, I grappled with numerous questions, feeling embarrassed about seeking help. It was difficult to find a balance between not wanting to burden specific individuals and obtaining assistance from those I felt at ease with! This struggle could have been ameliorated with a mentor's support, because that person could have helped guide me through the complexities of new systems.

Entering a new workplace involves more than filling out forms and setting up your computer—the underlying work culture, often overlaid with unspoken rules and practices, is equally significant. Decoding this hidden layer, typically learned implicitly through observation and interactions, can be particularly demanding for Autistic people and can cause frustration and confusion. One way to alleviate this stress is to find a mentor, someone who can illuminate these unwritten codes and provide insights into the implicit aspects of work culture.

Mentors can be formally assigned by your workplace or found informally through individuals you naturally connect with. If you are openly Autistic in the workplace, consider requesting a formal mentor as part of your accommodation requests. If not, consider asking someone you connect with to be your informal mentor as you learn the ropes.

Mentorship has the potential to enhance not only your understanding of work culture but also your personal and professional growth. Plus, this mentor can lower stress levels, help you believe in yourself, and allow you to thrive in your workplace.

Manage Overstimulation at Work

Optimal Work Environments

The workplace can be a breeding ground for overstimulation. When you're overstimulated, you're not going to be able to focus or work effectively. Managing your sensory environment becomes critical to cultivating a workplace in which you can thrive. I often call the perfect stimulus range the "Goldilocks zone," where I'm not understimulated or overstimulated. If you're an AuDHDer (Autistic ADHDer) like me, you'll understand this challenge! Discovering your Goldilocks zone is key for unlocking focus.

Here are some tailored strategies to consider:

- **Find a quiet retreat:** Request access to a dedicated quiet space. This can help counteract the overwhelming sensory input of a busy office.
- **Consider listening to music:** My favorite is having a repeat stim song playing in one earbud. This can create a sensory buffer without compromising awareness of the surroundings.
- **Schedule breaks:** Take short breaks to step away and recalibrate when sensory input overwhelms you.
- **Adjust your environment:** Modify lighting, seating, or desk arrangement to minimize sensory triggers.
- **Assemble a sensory tool kit:** Curate a sensory tool kit with items that soothe and regulate your sensory system, such as fidget toys, a weighted lap pad, or noise-canceling headphones.

By making these adjustments, you can cultivate a work environment that better aligns with your sensory needs. Plus, most of them are at low or no cost for your employer, making this a win-win situation. You'll find yourself calmer, more focused, and happier as you work.

Find Accommodations That Work

Optimal Work Environments

Accommodations might sound complex, but they can be surprisingly simple. For instance, I wear a beanie daily. While it might not look conventionally professional, the firm pressure provides sensory comfort and helps me regulate my body with more ease. Others may benefit from brimmed hats that block overhead light glare. Accommodations can also be more formal requests that go through human resources.

You may have legal rights to accommodations depending on your location and diagnosis status. In the United States, autism is protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act, ensuring reasonable accommodations.

Here are some accommodation ideas to consider:

- Sensory breaks
- Dedicated, focused work time
- Flexible work schedules for remote work
- Clear, direct, written feedback
- Noise-reducing workspace
- Ability to use noise-canceling headphones
- Adjustable lighting
- Use of fidget tools
- Reduced open-plan office exposure
- Access to a quiet zone
- Regular check-ins with a designated support person
- Flexible communication accommodating various preferences
- Advanced warning of schedule changes
- Providing a consistent routine and clear expectations

To discover accommodations and learn more, visit the Job Accommodation Network (JAN). They provide comprehensive workplace information and a searchable accommodation database. Accommodations like these can foster productivity, focus, creativity, and a sense of security at work.

Reduce Task Switching

Optimal Work Environments

"Task switching" refers to the act of stopping one task, saving its progress, and starting another, and it has a profound impact on your productivity and energy reserves. For example, if you're working on a report and then switch to answering emails or engaging in small talk with a colleague, that's a task switch.

Although the switch might be brief—perhaps taking a mere five minutes to respond to an incoming message—the aftermath of returning to the writing flow and mentally shifting back into the context of your project consumes precious time. Studies have shown that each task switch can cost you several minutes of focus!

For Autistic people, task switching is even more challenging compared to those with neurotypical brains (this is related to hyper- and hypoconnectivity in our brains). Our distinct cognitive processing makes transitioning between tasks more demanding.

Consider these strategies to mitigate task switching and ease the task-switching time drain:

- **Group similar tasks together:** Concentrating on related tasks in one session minimizes the need for frequent context shifts.
- **Manage your notifications:** Disable notifications during focused work periods. Uninterrupted concentration allows for deeper engagement without succumbing to constant task switching.
- **Request formal accommodations:** Consider requesting formal accommodations that can provide protected time, shielding you from distractions and task-switching pressures.

Minimizing task switching throughout your day enables you to immerse yourself in the deep, restorative, and creatively fulfilling work. Creating this space for focused work can lead to a more enjoyable and satisfying workday.

Set SMART Goals

Executive Functioning

Autistic brains tend to struggle to transition from one activity to another or to start new tasks (commonly referred to as task initiation). One factor that can hinder task initiation is related to executive functioning issues.

One effective strategy to overcome this hurdle is to break tasks down into their smallest components. For instance, when I struggled to begin working on writing this book, the smallest step was simply grabbing my computer and opening the document I wrote this book in. When I can get myself to do the first step, I can typically enter a flow state and start writing. The hardest part is starting!

The concept of SMART goals provides a structured approach for breaking tasks down into smaller elements. The SMART approach—creating goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound—acts as a framework for effective goal setting that can be applied to both your personal and professional lives. This method is particularly useful when tackling large workplace goals that are initially broad or long-term.

- **Specific:** Clearly define your desired outcome by being precise and detailed, avoiding vague intentions like "be better at my job" or "get healthier." Instead, pinpoint exactly what you want, like "learn how to use a new software."
- **Measurable:** Make your goal measurable with specific criteria, attaching numbers or metrics. This adds tangibility—like aiming to complete three online courses or send out ten job applications.
- **Achievable:** Set realistic and attainable goals considering your capabilities, available resources, and potential challenges. While it's important to challenge yourself, you want the goals to be within reach and aligned with your abilities and circumstances. This approach is more empowering and increases your chances of sticking with the goals.

- **Relevant:** Align your goals with your values, aspirations, and long-term plans. If your overarching goal is to get a job, then a relevant SMART goal might be to send out five job applications.
- **Time-bound:** Establish deadlines or target dates for achieving your goals. This creates a sense of urgency, keeps you focused, and promotes accountability. Setting a time frame, such as completing five job applications in a week, provides structure that helps keep you on track.

SMART goals provide a practical way to tackle extensive projects by creating a clear road map. Keep your goals under regular review, making tweaks as needed and celebrating progress along the way. Dividing larger objectives into smaller, doable tasks keeps you motivated while supporting steady progress. Achieving these smaller benchmarks can build confidence, relieve stress, and motivate you to create new goals as well.

Create Hyperfocus Bumper Rails

Executive Functioning

When it comes to productivity, hyperfocus can be a double-edged sword. On one hand, it can propel you into a state of flow, where your brain operates at peak performance, fostering enhanced focus, creativity, and deep engagement. This flow state can significantly boost your cognitive abilities, increase calming brain waves, and enhance your overall well-being.

However, hyperfocus also presents its own set of challenges. While in its grasp, it can monopolize your attention and time, potentially disrupting your sleep, derailing your ability to prioritize important tasks, and creating imbalances in your work-life harmony. For instance, in my life it can lead to moments where I unintentionally neglect family and personal life, disrupt my sleep patterns, and disregard the maintenance and mundane aspects of my work! Over time, these consequences can manifest as burnout, strained relationships, sleep disturbances, and work difficulties.

Navigating hyperfocus involves finding a balance and taking control of your focus. Think of it like setting gentle rail guards to keep your hyperfocus on the right track while maintaining a healthy work-life equilibrium. This way, you can harness the benefits of deep, passionate engagement without letting it overshadow other crucial aspects of your life or work.

- **Create an exit strategy:** Set an exit plan if you anticipate engaging in an activity that triggers hyperfocus. This may include using alarms, involving another person, or intentionally scheduling a hyperfocused activity at a specific time of day.
- **Schedule hyperfocus blocks:** If you know you are someone who can work well with hyperfocus, try and protect time blocks in your work schedule for this. For example, I rarely schedule meetings on Wednesday and "gift" myself with one hyperfocus day a week. For other people, it may look like scheduling one three-hour block a day of uninterrupted work time.

- **Use reminders and timers:** Employ alarms or timers to stay mindful of the time and transition away from hyperfocus projects when necessary. Set reminders to take breaks, engage in other activities, and attend to essential tasks.
- **Engage in mindful moments:** Shifting your focus away can be challenging. If you struggle with shifting your attention when timers go off, utilize the timer slightly differently—use it as a prompt for a mindful moment. When the timer alerts you, take a brief pause and ask yourself, "Is this what I want to be doing right now?" The goal is to increase your agency and intentional decision-making. This practice cultivates awareness and creates space for intentional transitions, allowing you greater control over your choices.

Managing hyperfocus is about finding a healthy balance that allows you to enjoy your interests while attending to other important aspects of your life. By incorporating strategies and mindful practices, you can navigate hyperfocus in a way that supports balance and harmony.

Overcome Autistic Inertia

Executive Functioning

Inertia, a concept that states objects in motion tend to stay in motion while objects at rest tend to stay at rest, has been cleverly adapted to describe the challenges Autistic people face in stopping or starting tasks. This stop-and-go struggle is often referred to as "Autistic inertia."

When we're struggling to start new tasks, it can feel like there's a wave of resistance to getting started or shifting focus. However, some strategies can help you overcome Autistic inertia.

- **Break tasks into smaller steps:** Divvying a large project into manageable chunks can make it less overwhelming and easier to approach.
- **Utilize external cues:** Visual cues or alarms can prompt you to initiate or transition between tasks. These cues provide structure and direct your attention, for example, signaling the start of an activity.
- **Incorporate preferred activities and special interests:** By infusing elements of enjoyment and passion, you can tap into intrinsic motivation, making it easier to overcome inertia and engage in the task at hand. For instance, if you're passionate about presenting data in highly visual and accessible ways, you might infuse your reports with engaging visualizations and explore complex datasets.
- **Try the five-minute rule:** Set a five-minute timer and commit to working on the task for five minutes (permitting yourself to stop when the timer goes off). The key is to overcome the initial resistance by committing to five minutes, and often you find that once you start, it becomes easier to continue.

By learning to harness your natural inertia and align yourself with the current rather than fighting against it, you can unlock your creative potential and dive into deep processing. This approach leads to a more enriching and expansive work experience.

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